

N THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently amended): A toothbrush, where tufting holes formed in a tufting part are ~~almost~~ elliptic or ~~almost~~ rectangular, a lengthwise direction of the tufting holes is along the direction the handle length, and the tufting holes are inclined, in directions perpendicular to lengthwise directions of the handle length, toward a tufting surface so as to have tufts implanted therein support one another.

Claim 2 (cancelled)

Claim 3 (Previously presented): A toothbrush according to Claim 1 wherein there is at least one group of tufting holes that form a pair inclined to an inside.

Claim 4 (Previously presented): A toothbrush according to Claim 1, wherein inclination from a vertical direction of inclined tufting holes is 2 to 10°.

Claim 5 (Previously presented): A toothbrush according to Claim 1, wherein monofilament that form tufts to be implanted in the tufting holes have a rectangular cross section, a direction of a long side of this cross section being along the lengthwise direction of the tufting holes.

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/674,931

Claim 6 (Previously presented): A toothbrush according to claim 1, wherein there are a plurality of converging blocks of a pair of two tufts facing and supporting one another.

Claim 7 (Previously presented): A toothbrush according to Claim 1, wherein an end portion of each tuft that has been implanted is worked into a V-shape.

Claim 8 (Previously presented): A toothbrush according to Claim 6, wherein converging blocks are at least at a front or a back in the lengthwise direction of a tufting base.

Claim 9 (Previously presented): A toothbrush according to Claim 6, wherein a next row of converging blocks is positioned behind a space that is formed between converging blocks in a front row in the direction of handle length.

Claim 10 (Currently amended): A toothbrush according to any one of Claims 1 or 3 through 9, wherein an anchor that is driven into a tufting base in a folded part of a tuft that has been folded in a center in its lengthwise direction is driven into the tufting hole so that it is almost parallel to a long side or a short side of the tufting hole and opening surface area of the tufting hole is divided into two equal parts in order to embed and support said tufts in the tufting hole.

Claim 11 (Previously presented): A toothbrush according to claim 10, wherein said anchor is positioned $\pm 10^\circ$ with respect to a center line along a lengthwise direction of said tufting hole.

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/674,931

Claim 12 (Original): A toothbrush according to Claim 11, wherein the centers of the tufting holes are not lined up on one straight line in the direction of handle length.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): A toothbrush according to any one of the Claims 1 or 3 through 9 wherein tufting holes account for 10 to 30 mm in a direction of handle length and 5 to 15 mm in a direction of handle width.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): A toothbrush according to any one of Claims 1 or 3 through 9, wherein the tufting holes are almost rectangular and a short side of these almost rectangular tufting holes has dimensions of 0.8 to 2.0 mm, while a long side has dimensions of 1.5 to 5.0 mm.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended) A toothbrush according to any one of Claims ~~[[2]]~~ 3 through 9, wherein a distance at a base between the tufts that form a pair and make up converging blocks is 0.2 to 4.0 mm.

Claim 16 (Previously presented): A toothbrush according to any one of Claims 6 through 9, wherein there are five rows of tufts in the lengthwise direction of the tufting base, with rows one and five forming one converging block in a center in a direction of width of a tufting base, rows two and four forming two converging blocks on either side sandwiching the center in the direction of width of the tufting base, and row three forming one converging block at the center in the direction of width of the converging block, and there is one independent tuft, each inclined so that it is in the

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/674,931

same direction as the tufts that form said converging blocks, but its end portion does not touch the converging blocks, to an outside of said converging blocks.